

Adopted: 10.5.24

Revised:

NORTH METRO FLEX ACADEMY POLICY No. 5.7.4 STUDENT JOURNALISM

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect students' rights to free speech in production of official school publications while at the same time balancing the school district's role in supervising student publications and the operation of public schools.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

- A.** North Metro Flex Academy reserves the right to exercise editorial oversight over the style and content of student expression in school-sponsored publications and activities.
- B.** Student expression in publications does not represent official school policy. Faculty advisors will oversee student work to ensure compliance with school guidelines and applicable laws.
- C.** Students who feel their free expression rights have been unduly restricted in school-sponsored media may request a review by the principal, who will respond within three (3) school days.
- D.** School-sponsored media will be distributed at designated times and locations under the supervision of a faculty advisor and the school principal.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Distribution:*** The dissemination of material, whether by hand, mail, sale, or display, throughout the school.
- B. *Material and Substantial Disruption:*** Any disruption to normal school operations, including compulsory or voluntary activities, that impedes school functions.
- C. *Minor:*** Any student under 18 years old.
- D. *Obscene to Minors:*** Content that community standards deem inappropriate for minors due to prurient interests or lack of value.
- E. *School Activities:*** Any school-sponsored student activities, including assemblies, athletic events, and in-school periods.
- F. *School-Sponsored Media:*** Content created by student journalists for publication or broadcast under school supervision, excluding classroom-only materials or yearbooks.
- G. *Student Journalist:*** A North Metro Flex Academy student in grades 6–12 involved in the creation

of school-sponsored media.

H. Student Media Adviser: A designated teacher who supervises and instructs student journalists.

IV. GUIDELINES

A. Student journalists have the right to free speech in school-sponsored media, regardless of school financial or facility involvement. Students may express political views and determine content under this freedom.

B. Prohibited Expression: Student media must not contain material that:

- A. Is obscene to minors
- B. Is defamatory
- C. Includes harassment or threats
- D. Invades privacy
- E. Violates federal or state laws
- F. Disrupts school activities
- G. Incites illegal activities
- H. Advertises products restricted for minors
- I. Promotes prejudice, harassment, or violence

C. The school will not retaliate against a student media adviser who supports a student's freedom of expression.

D. Advisers may instruct students on professional journalism standards, including clarity, accuracy, appropriateness for audience, and neutrality on political matters.

VI. TIME, PLACE, AND MANNER OF DISTRIBUTION

A. Time: Distribution is allowed before school, during lunch, and after school hours.

B. Place: Materials may be distributed in designated areas that do not disrupt traffic or access to school facilities.

C. Manner: No coercion or force is permitted in distributing publications.

VII. POSTING POLICY

North Metro Flex Academy will post this policy on its website in compliance with Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.80.

Legal references:

- **Minnesota Statutes, Section 121A.03:** Policies prohibiting harassment, violence, and discrimination in schools.
- **Minnesota Statutes, Section 121A.031:** Requirements for school anti-bullying policies.
- **Minnesota Statutes, Section 121A.80:** Regulations surrounding student journalists and school-sponsored media.
- **Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District, 393 U.S. 503 (1969):**

Established students' rights to free speech in schools unless it causes substantial disruption.

- ***Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988):*** *Established school rights to regulate school-sponsored publications for pedagogical concerns.*
- ***First Amendment, U.S. Constitution:*** *Ensures the rights of free speech and free press.*